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BOOK REVIEWS

The conquest of the old Southwest. The romantic story of the early pioneers into Virginia, the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Kentucky, 1740-1790. By Archibald Henderson, Ph.D., D. C. L. (New York: The Century company, 1920. xxiv, 395 p.)

It would be easy to underestimate the value of this book. The extent of the field which the author undertakes to cover — “the romantic story of the early pioneers into Virginia, the Carolinas, Tennessee and Kentucky, 1740-1790” — is great; the size of the volume, in comparison with that of Roosevelt’s *Winning of the west* or that of Winsor’s *Westward movement*, is small; the interest which, despite a redundancy of adjectives and some excess in the use of the superlative, attaches to the narrative is absorbing; consequently one might read the book hastily in the spirit in which one looks at a moving picture and, if passing judgment at all, might say to himself, “Here is an excellent piece of popular history writing.” All this, indeed, the book is; but it is also much more. The solid bibliographical list and the mass of footnotes which follow the text are a challenge to the critic, inviting him to a searching examination of the author’s research and presentation of the facts. Moreover, the book is the fulfillment of an obligation; for Mr. Henderson, in many newspaper and magazine articles, has worked over this or that part of the field, all the while promising to students of southern history the elaboration of his results into a larger synthesis. The promise, one may safely say, has been duly kept; the challenge has been well met. Mr. Henderson has written a book which will command the attention of the student no less than the favor of the general reader.

Fairly to support this judgment we must proceed to a brief summary of Mr. Henderson’s book. The introduction, devoted to an interpretation of the significance of the history of the frontier, reveals the indebtedness of the author to the writings of Professor Turner, an indebtedness which is felicitously acknowledged in the dedication of the book to that distinguished scholar. The early chapters deal with the southern part of that region which Professor Turner has named “the Old West”—the country between the tidewater settlements and the mountain barriers of the Appalachian system. The in-pouring of the Scotch-Irish and of the German sectaries, and the manner of living which these and the English immigrants developed in the back country are skillfully summarized. Upon this foundation is built so full an account of Daniel

Boone and of those pioneers with whom he was connected either by association or by family ties, that one almost expects the book to develop into a life of Boone. But the author passes on to two of the topics in regard to which his work is most original and valuable — the Cherokee war in the south and the “regulator” difficulties in North Carolina. Of the former of these we have here one of the best accounts available, and as good a one as can be written without the exploiting of material which Mr. Henderson, like his predecessors, has neglected — the rich manuscript records of South Carolina. There is a very full outline of the doings of the hunters who, before Boone or during the time of his wanderings, were, like him, acquiring an ever-increasing body of geographical knowledge concerning the transmontane region. The account of the early speculative companies of Virginia is satisfactory, but the part played by Washington in connection with westward expansion, the farsighted vision of Franklin, and the influence of the Pennsylvania merchants and their associates in New York and New Jersey, who gave support to George Croghan, are not so clearly presented.

We are thus brought to what constitutes the central portion of the book, the reason for its existence. The main thesis of Mr. Henderson, as all who have followed his former writings know, is that the most significant creative factor in the development of westward expansion in the south was Richard Henderson of North Carolina. This North Carolina judge, according to Mr. Henderson, shortly after the peace of 1763 conceived the idea of buying land from the Indians, from about the same time furthered the scouting expeditions of Daniel Boone who had become indebted to Henderson and his partners, formed successive companies for speculation and settlement which culminated in the Transylvania company, obtained from England legal advice to the effect that private purchases from the Indians would give good legal title, and, after the establishment of the settlements on the headwaters of the Tennessee river, and the war conducted by the Earl of Dunmore, founded the colony at Boonesborough. This establishment of Boonesborough Mr. Henderson interprets as of critical importance in American history because at that place was made, in the course of the revolution, the stand against the Indians supported by the English, which defeated the plans of the British for the reconquest of the Northwest. After describing the Indian troubles of 1776 and sketching the course of events to 1779, Mr. Henderson shows how Richard Henderson was related to the founding of the settlement upon the Cumberland river, which later became Nashville, Tennessee. There are three additional chapters, but these are rather detached from the rest of the work. One tells of the King’s Mountain campaign; one, of the state of Franklin; and the last, of the approaches which, in 1789, Sevier and Robertson and their friends made to the

Spanish authorities, offering to deliver over to them the settlers in the Tennessee country. This, in very brief statement, is the scope of Mr. Henderson's book. It affords a very excellent explanation of many of the forces at work in the southern interior before and during the revolutionary period, with a much narrower view of the decade after 1780.

In the excellent bibliographical note which is found at the end of the volume and in various footnotes Mr. Henderson has very justly called attention to the defect that marks Roosevelt's *Winning of the west*, which "over-accentuates the strenuous life and largely underemphasizes economic and governmental phases." "Mr. Roosevelt's virile apotheosis of the strenuous pioneer seems to-day almost as old-fashioned in its method and outlook as is Draper's work on King's Mountain." A very careful reading of Mr. Henderson's volume leaves the reviewer inclined to the belief that it is not altogether free from the limitations which the author ascribes to the work of Mr. Roosevelt. In the first place, the materials available in printed form are sufficient to enable the student to form a reasonably clear picture of the internal situation in the colonies of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina during the period which is covered by this book. In the chapter on the regulators, the author takes full account of the economic factors that lay behind that conflict; but thereafter these factors receive little notice, and the same may be said for the constitutional difficulties that existed when events led to the outbreak of armed rebellion. Must not some explanation be offered for the fact that the governors of North Carolina and Virginia were not able to follow up with more effective measures the proclamations which they promulgated against Richard Henderson? In North Carolina, particularly, the financial situation of the government is worthy of attention.

Again, is it possible in the light of recent studies such as those of Carter and of Alvord to lift out of the British colonies the four which Mr. Henderson has chosen, and to omit any account of Georgia and the Floridas? The establishment of Georgia and the acquisition of the Floridas in certain important aspects of administration made the southern provinces constitute almost a unit. This appears in the management of Indian affairs, in ministerial policies as to colonization, and, on the military side, in the refuge afforded to the loyalist element when the revolution broke out. This loyalist element in the west, it must be added, receives little attention from Mr. Henderson and then only in a rather conventional way. For example, Mr. Henderson repeats the old partisan statement that "during the spring of 1776 plans were concerted, chiefly through Stuart and Cameron, British agents among the Southern Indians, for uniting the Loyalists and the Indians in a crushing attack upon the Tennessee settlements and the back country of North Carolina," and recounts the old story of Nancy Ward and her warning

to the settlers; whereas the truth is that the orders to use the savages came directly from General Gage and were defended by him as mere retaliation for the action of the Americans in "bringing as many Indians down against us as they could collect"; that Stuart had used every degree of influence at his command to keep the Indians quiet and even after he received Gage's letter had declared to his deputies that he could not interpret his orders as intending an indiscriminate use of the savages. Moreover, it was Stuart's deputy, Henry Stuart, who warned the settlers of their peril.

To mention this merely as a matter of detail might seem hypercritical; but the error has a deeper significance. In this place, and on three or four other occasions, Mr. Henderson does mention John Stuart; but of the significance of his office, that of the superintendent of Indian affairs in the southern department, Mr. Henderson does not reveal a very definite conception. In his introduction he devotes over a page to the place in frontier history occupied by the Indian trader, and in his earlier chapters he speaks of the rivalry of Virginia and South Carolina in the Indian trade. But of the actualities of this matter he has nothing further to say. What European demands lay behind the Indian trade, how it was carried on from the Indian to the trader, from the trader to the merchant, and from the merchant to Europe — these questions are not considered. Nor is this matter taken up in the light of imperial administration, though from Professor Alvord's notable work, *The Mississippi valley in British politics*, which Mr. Henderson cites in his bibliography, he would have derived much that is indispensable in the consideration of this subject. Had he proceeded beyond Mr. Alvord's account he would have found that the purchases made by such traders as Pearis and Hite from the Cherokee had something to do with the confusion in the minds of the Indians which made possible Richard Henderson's success at Sycamore Shoals, and with Governor Martin's description of Henderson as a "land pyrate." Nothing is more creditable to the British administration than the steadfast protests of John Stuart against the corruption that the traders brought amongst the Indians, and nothing reveals more clearly the fact that the British administrative system was a failure than the inability of both governors and ministry to support effectively the endeavors of their faithful but helpless servant.

With regard to some of the later phases of the narrative a similar criticism appears to be justified. The dramatic aspect of the struggle between Henderson and George Rogers Clark, which resulted ultimately in the destruction by the Virginia convention of the Transylvania enterprise, strongly appeals to the author. He fails, however, to make clear the important relation to this of the other problems which Virginia had to face at the same time, the activities of the Indiana claimants, the ef-

forts of the Illinois-Wabash company, the attack from Maryland on Virginia's interpretation of its boundaries, the debate in the continental congress. In the later period, too, the financial aspect of the western land question is overlooked, although this had an essential bearing on the development of the Cumberland region as well as on that of Kentucky.

We come next to the central thesis of Mr. Henderson's work — the activities of Richard Henderson in the settlement of his Kentucky colony. The main facts are established beyond question, but as to many details there is need for further documentation. As to Henderson's plans and the employment of Boone by Henderson before 1773, the statements of the author are supported by a number of authorities, but these are preponderantly the expression of later tradition rather than of contemporary evidence. It is certain that Henderson obtained a copy of the familiar opinion of Yorke and Camden as to the validity of private purchases from the Indians, and that he attached great weight thereto; but that he received personally any opinion from the British law officers seems to the reviewer open to question. With regard to the essential reasonableness of the Camden-Yorke opinion, as applied to Henderson's purchase (concerning which Mr. Henderson argues at some length in a footnote) there is room for wide difference of opinion. Mr. Henderson seems to confuse the question of the legality of a title derived from the Indians (as compared with that of a title derived from a royal grant) with the question of the legality on the part of private subjects of any negotiations with the Indians as to land, in contravention of the king's prohibition of such dealings. At any rate the propriety of such action on the part of one who had very shortly before held of the crown a commission as a judge would seem not above question. In a far less serious case of the same sort William Henry Drayton of South Carolina felt himself bound to make a long, detailed explanation of his conduct. It is true that in the development of the Vandalia scheme and in other cases the crown had made itself party to a procedure apparently similar, but in these cases the very great difference was that the leaders did not move toward the settlement of their land until they had received the approval of the crown. If we say that Henderson defied the royal government and anticipated the independence of America, it is to be noted that both the states of Virginia and North Carolina, while they were willing to accept the results of Henderson's purchase, at once made it illegal for any of their citizens to repeat the experiment.

Finally, the character of the government which the Transylvania company planned for its colony indicates that it was hoping to establish a colony of the older type and was seeking to gain for itself a revenue from

quitrents which it was almost beyond the power of well-established provincial governments to collect. This consideration must detract somewhat from the high estimate which the author places upon the statesmanship of the Transylvania proprietors; but it does not militate at all against a just appreciation of the shrewdness and boldness with which they carried their plans into execution.

The book is attractively illustrated, with a serviceable map. With very few exceptions the proof reading of the text has been well done; of the index, unfortunately, the opposite is true.

ST. GEORGE L. SIOUSSAT

Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia. 3 volumes. Edited by H. R. McIlwaine. (Richmond: 1918, 1919)

There have been numerous reasons, all personal, for the delay in reviewing this important publication, but the scholarly character of the work is such that even a belated rendering of account may be excused by those readers of this review who are not familiar with the remarkable output of the staff of the Virginia state library.

The work in local American history has suffered most severely from its sporadic and haphazard character. Only a few institutions have even to-day adopted a carefully planned policy in editing and publishing such as is characteristic of the great European historical institutions. Rather than exercise their minds on a program for performing their duties, councils or boards of state historical institutions seem to prefer to wait, like Macawber, for something to turn up. The something is generally accidental and has no necessary relation to what has already been printed or to what is to be printed in the future. The directors of historical work are only too pleased that they have published or are about to publish an "important [*sic*] manuscript by Mr. Blank, who from long residence in this community has many friends." Public and private funds are all too frequently wasted on the haphazard printing of worthless emanations from untrained minds. Even when the publications are seemingly worthy, much time and effort are dissipated by the lack of plan, coöperation, and prolonged study.

By contrast with the work of the usual state institution the efforts of the Virginia state library are most refreshing. For fifteen years now, since Mr. J. P. Kennedy, then state librarian, determined to publish the journal of the house of burgesses, up to the present time, there have appeared at regular intervals these large volumes of most valuable source material, until the number has reached sixteen—thirteen volumes of the journal of the house of burgesses and these three of the journal of the council, making a completed work, well done.

It will be remembered that Mr. Kennedy began with the last of the